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ABSTRACT

The goal of this conference was to develop a national agenda for continuing professional education. Leaders from higher education, professional associations, business, industry, and government convened to discuss issues germane to the field and to establish a communication network to address those issues in the future. The conference was designed as a working meeting. A keynote address set the tone. Three general sessions were devoted to major issues: roles of continuing professional education providers, academic/industry partnerships, and delivery systems for continuing professional education. Each general session was followed by a series of small group discussion sessions that offered ample opportunities for exchange of ideas. The conference concluded with the development of small focus groups of 8 to 10 participants from various professions and representing different types of providers. The 10 focus groups were to deal with these topics identified from the small group discussion sessions: develop continuing professional education mindware, identify components of a usable cross-professional data base, explore the range of potential needs assessment methods, build collaborative relationships among providers, explore the technology twist, identify megatrends continuing professional education must address, educate the whole person in every setting, determine the kind of educators professionals need and who should pay, and develop interprofessional collaboration. (YLB)

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A Report of

The National Conference on Continuing Professional Education

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September 28-October 1, 1986

*The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pennsylvania*

The goal of the National Conference on Continuing Professional Education was to develop a national agenda for continuing professional education. Leaders from higher education, professional associations, business, industry, and government were brought together to discuss issues germane to the field and to establish a communication network to address those issues in the future.

The conference was designed as a working meeting. A keynote address set the tone of the conference, and three general sessions were devoted to major issues: roles of continuing professional education providers; academic industry partnerships; and delivery systems for continuing professional education.

Each general session was followed by a series of small group discussion sessions, which offered ample opportunity for exchange of ideas.

The final morning of the conference was spent summarizing the work of the past two days. First in small groups, and then in a general summary session, the agenda for the future was mapped out.

Many ideas were explored, challenges offered, and cooperative relationships built in the course of the conference. It is impossible to capture all of these, but this report is an attempt to distill the essence of what took place.



The National Conference on Continuing Professional Education was sponsored by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and The Pennsylvania State University.

Before

Change was the mission of the 130 men and women who arrived at Penn State on September 28, 1986. A revolution in continuing professional education was their goal.

They came not only from other universities, but from corporate offices and professional associations as well. They were leaders and key figures in the organizations they represented. They came to bring unity to heretofore fractionalized efforts in continuing professional education.

They recognized that each group, if not each individual, had a short-term vested interest, but they also acknowledged that if they could not form a viable coalition, they would never realize their goals.

The preceding 20 years had seen a burst of new technology that as a whole had provided "hardware" for learning. Now, these visionaries had caught a glimpse that they could provide the "software" to harness the knowledge explosion.

Milton Stern, Dean of University Extension at the University of California-Berkeley, described the setting as one in which new questions would be asked . . . or at least old questions would be asked in a new way. This, he said, was evidence of a societal transition. In his keynote address, he discussed the "Learning Landscape" for professionals and he characterized it as one of confusion rather than patterned order. Stern cautioned that the forces of society's educational changes were still at a "journalistic" stage, one of data collection.

"The learning landscape is in motion. Talking about it at this frozen moment you get but a fleeting glance. By the time we look, it may have changed," he said.

The time was now, and conferees were ready to chart a course and head toward the future. Gathering at a welcoming reception sponsored by Exxon Research and Engineering

Company, they agreed on at least one thing: their task would not be easy.

The conference format had been developed by a planning committee of 13 representatives of higher education, business and industry, professional associations, and government. It was structured to maximize discussion and the exchange of ideas. Following the keynote address, three general session presentations were interspersed with thirty-five small group discussions.

On the last day of the conference, small groups convened one more time, to summarize. Wrap-up speaker Philip Nowlen, Executive Director of the Office of Continuing Education, University of Chicago, offered a final view of where the field of continuing professional education had been and where it was going.

Conferees came from a societal context which needed to accept the notion that the formal education process was not to be abandoned with a college degree, nor with a graduate degree and license which admitted the holder to professional practice. The operative manifesto was that a new educational paradigm emphasizing lifelong learning must be designed, one in which continuing professional education would be an integral part.

Meeting and greeting formalities were marked with warm personal comradery and with professional suspicion . . . or at least skepticism. It was Robert Craig, Editor, *Training and Development Handbook*, who lamented that the various groups represented at the conference just didn't have enough understanding of one another.

Badi Foster, President, Aetna Institute for Corporate Education, confirmed the perception. "What we've got here are different tribes," he said.

Thus the purpose of this conference report . . . to share with all of those who have the capacity to make a difference, the immediate and long range priorities to effect meaningful change.



The impression which emerged was that educators from universities were looking for their long range revolution, but representatives who had a business or corporate orientation were frustrated that short-term personnel education and training needs are not being met.

Ralph Doshier, Manager, Corporate Training and Education for Texas Instruments, Inc., echoed the conference theme that it was time to create a national agenda for the

business of continuing professional education. And Doshier went a step further in saying he hoped that, once established at this conference, the agenda would draw the support of influential individuals at every level.

Thus the purpose of this conference report . . . to share with all of those who have the capacity to make a difference, the immediate and long range priorities to effect meaningful change.

During

As general sessions and workshops commenced, the participants could sense movement had begun. What direction it would take was unclear. Not unlike harbingers of earthquakes, signals were subtle but unmistakable.

General session spokespersons from business and industry pulled no punches when they remarked that their organizations had responsibility for insuring that their employment force was conversant with the latest in technology, and higher education should join them in developing the content to be used with that technology.

Robert DeSio, IBM Director of University Relations, echoed the theme. Saying it is difficult to cope with change and difficult to anticipate the future, he also called for a more communicative partnership between higher education and the business community.

"Industry has gone ahead of academia . . . there is a time warp when the product changes so fast it compels industry to provide its own education . . . specialization compels reeducation to diversify the usefulness of specialists whose specialties are obsolete," were some of DeSio's verbal thrusts.

In frustrated tones, he challenged

higher education, saying, "I can't stand the 'study, study, study, and do nothing' mentality. Jump in and try something."

But if Foster and DeSio were unabashedly proud of their own companies' in-house training programs, each admitted a dependence upon higher education to provide industries' management teams with critical thinking abilities, creativity, and human relations skills.

"Machines are easy; people are not," Foster said. He called the application of human relations in the workplace the critical variable. That didn't mean he was confident the universities are poised to perform their role in the new partnership. "Yes, we would put human relations R & D money in the universities, but the faculties will have to overcome 40 years of tradition. They tend to replicate themselves and even when they want to change they don't know how. They don't want to even walk by the continuing education offices," Foster charged.

DeSio, while critical of higher education, also called for its "strong linkage" with business and industry. "The university is responsible for concepts while the business sector teaches the application," he said. "The human resource and research are products of the university.

"We (business) are motivated to help educate because we helped create the dilemma," DeSio said, referring to the gap between knowledge and application. He called for joint studies and contracts. "We must try to get people back into the habit of learning, with industry providing the training so the employee can do the job today, and with the university providing the education and base knowledge for a lifetime career."

Because IBM is putting money into its own training facilities, DeSio said his company would be on a "flat level" financial plan in funding universities. "We're worried about liberal arts, but we have to follow our priorities. Education is risk money pay-in with an uncertainty of a payoff."

DeSio opened another subject: "Why isn't higher education using the newest technology in the learner process?" This theme would be taken up by yet another general session speaker, Dee Brock, Vice-President for Adult Learning, Public Broadcasting System. She said higher education is not "translating miracles (of technology)" into educational uses.

"It's time to stop analyzing and puzzling over it (technology) and to use it more purposefully," she said.

She offered other criticisms of higher education and universities:

- Strategic planning is directed at buildings, endowments and curricula but not at learning and teaching . . . technology is used as a cost saving tool, not to improve learning and teaching. The teaching profession is in need of continuing professional education.
- When, within university systems, the right hand does not know what the left is doing (not having a complete inventory of what technology is already available) there is either a turf problem or

just not enough collaboration. The result is lost opportunities.

From her perspective, Brock said she wanted to debunk a few myths:

- Technology is too costly . . . ask what it will cost not to use it!
- The "We've tried it and it didn't work" syndrome . . . ask what "it" is and if "it" is more than five years old "it" has changed.
- Technology can't teach . . . just lay that one to rest . . . studies show that television can teach at least as well (as the instructor in front of a classroom of students).

Brock challenged her audience to take a creative look at what can be done and to spend the time to make a case for it. She cautioned not to impoverish the effort by thinking too narrowly.

In his summary analysis, Philip Nowlen translated earlier criticisms into a hopeful note. "The quality of the turbulence (among those in the continuing professional education field) has improved. Five years ago it was provider-centered, a penny dreadful weeping of the field's being undervalued by the universities and the professions. Now, there are learner-centered questions which focus on competence, performance, and the tools which can be utilized to achieve improvement in both areas."

The problem of identifying the "professional" to whom continuing professional education is addressed was mentioned frequently.

Foster and DeSio had focused on corporate employees; Brock had described the target market as adults who are busy, educated, motivated, driven by employers or legislation, and can afford continuing education. Earlier, Milton Stern, in his keynote address, had emphasized a different and seemingly a more commonly accepted definition: . . . "Continuing



professional education is conducted at advanced levels for skilled professionals . . . our shop talk is different from that of the practitioners in basic adult literacy or first line supervision . . . it is different, too, from that of colleagues in collegiate credit instruction for adults."

Nowlen put the issue into perspective, saying there is a need for more understanding of the field and perhaps a greater need for order. But given the choice, he said he would choose not an "either/or" camp but an "and more" camp. He complimented his audience for having come a long way. "Ten years ago we were asking which profession is really a profession; five years ago we decided to be inclusive rather than exclusive, although at that time we still considered business as somewhat tawdry. Today business is a major context of professional practice."

By arguing that the understanding of knowledge also has changed, he touched many bases when he illustrated the impossibility of addressing professionals as "decontextualized individuals."

With some visual aids, Nowlen said it was time to analyze different models for continuing professional education.

The update model . . . Nowlen drew laughter with his analogy "Keeping up-to-date doesn't unify the (continuing professional education) field any more than astrology unifies the universe."

"Jimmy Carter could have been the most up-to-date president ever in terms of information available, but Thomas Jefferson was better informed," Nowlen said to a room full of agreeing nods.

This model is simply an extension of professional schools, adding a little new technology and new legislation, Nowlen said. It provokes competition rather than collaboration.

The competence model . . . is better than the update model. In this scenario, Nowlen said it is necessary to find out what professionals do for a living in the real world. It was suggested that this is not always apparent. If the worker is asked what his job is, he often will give a different answer to the description of the job than is offered by his immediate superior. But, Nowlen said, this model does lead to a way of setting priorities and creating programs within the context of a profession.

"A pharmacist is not a pharmacist, is not a pharmacist," Nowlen stole from Stein. A pharmacist can be a small businessman running his own pharmacy or a bench researcher. Each would have different needs, some of which may overlap with small business operators or researchers from other professions. The missing element in the competence model is that it considers only the job context.

The performance model . . . Nowlen said, offers the chance to examine critical skills which are needed for competent performance and in anticipation of new roles. It offers the possibility of applying human relations. If in the same context, there are two professionals doing the same job and one succeeds while the other fails, the variable factor may be critical mind skills.

Reflective of earlier remarks made by Foster, Nowlen suggested that competence often is the result of more grit, better self image, higher motivation, or another specific attitude.

There needs to be a research agenda to identify the interplay of competence and performance, Nowlen said, suggesting that opportunities for collaboration exist to study plateau levels and conducive environments for maximum performance.

Nowlen listed the inability to handle private lives (the problems of

UPDATE MODEL

DEMAND
KEEPING UP WITH
PROFESSION'S TRADITIONAL
KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS BASE

NEW TECHNOLOGY

NEW LEGISLATION

UPDATES
AND
REFRESHERS

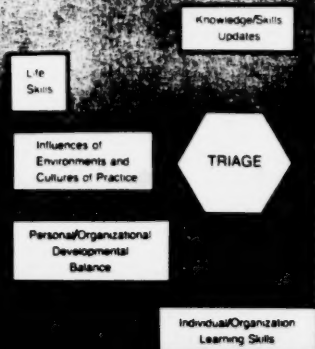
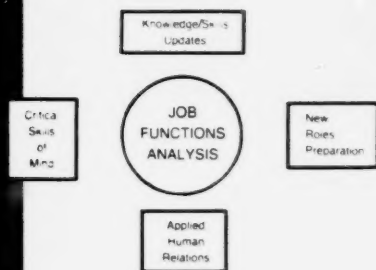
divorce or middle age crisis for example) . . . too many charitable or civic commitments . . . a hobby that has become a compulsion . . . or fatigue or depression as possible obstacles to peak performance.

"It is impossible to seal the balance of life from professional activity," he concluded.

The general session speakers highlighted key issues. They

included the needs for: universities to fully commit themselves to continuing professional education; independent and collaborative action; greater diversity in delivery systems; and new models for enhancing professional performance. It remained for the small group discussion sessions to wrestle with the difficulties raised.

COMPETENCE MODEL



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What's Next?

When a conference is launched with the hope that the eventual result will be a major societal change, even the optimistic realize that the most that can be hoped for immediately is to reach a turning point. From there it is possible to move forward and to pick up speed along the way.

The conclusion of this conference was just the commencement. With that in mind the thoughts expressed in the small group sessions have been pulled together to set the stage for that new beginning.

One of the most often heard remarks from participants was that the kinds of conversations and the networking begun at Penn State in 1986 had to continue. They did qualify, however, that the time for generalities was at an end. This conference should be followed, they said, with a focus on major issues and an action plan to confront them.

Conference participants agreed that the topics identified from the small group discussion sessions must be dealt with in small focus groups of eight to ten participants, from various professions and representing different types of providers, during the next two years. The plan for implementing this call to action is as follows:

- formation by March 1, 1987 of focus groups to address each of the issues
- independent deliberation of each focus group, resulting in a report or other product by January, 1989
- convening of a second National Conference on Continuing Professional Education in the Spring, 1989, at which time all focus groups will report on the results of their deliberations

Expressions of interest in participation in the individual focus groups should be directed to Penn State's Office of Continuing Professional Education.

There is every confidence that as the dialogue continues it will be not only stimulating, but productive in that it will help create professionals better prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

The topics identified for the focus groups are more specific in nature than those recently explored, and the format proposed in and of itself will promote greater collaboration in the field of providing continuing education for professionals.

Focus Group 1:

Developing Continuing Professional Education Mindware

This challenging task is one of the most crucial. It is simply not enough to have a committed core of individuals try to solve problems; a wide-spread awareness of continuing professional education must be created in the educational and professional communities. And perhaps the most important task is to chart a course that will excite the imagination of the consumers of continuing professional education, the professional practitioners. Thus this group will be faced with defining strategies to elevate the

awareness of and commitment to continuing professional education as an ongoing practitioner and professional responsibility. The group also will develop guidelines to assist professionals in designing their own lifelong learning plans.

Background:

Many elements of the conference were pulled together to create this next-step issue.

There was a discussion of the need to challenge educators to re-examine

"Industry wants us to train skills-specific technicians who can immediately be pumped into the workplace, used up, and then laid off in a couple of years. We have to tell them that higher education has a much broader purpose."

Milton Stern

the preprofessional curriculum. It must orient students to an expectation that they will have to be prepared to participate in lifelong learning in some formalized ways. The learning continuum is needed because professional roles change as quickly as the body of knowledge grows.

At a small group discussion session led by Robert Hofstader, Manager of the Education and Development Unit of Exxon Research and Engineering Company, it was said that education must be viewed as a process, not a product, and that as a process it would facilitate change.

Another suggestion offered which addressed cultural changes in the pre-professional state was increased cross-profession exposure at an undergraduate level through some shared curriculum and planned activities.

Also, it was said that higher education administration must recognize the value of continuing professional education through the faculty reward structure and by according appropriate status for participation.

It is critical that current practitioners develop frameworks for their long-term professional development, and that ways be identified to assist them in doing so. Employers can promote these values, and help create a self-directed learning environment as well.

It also was noted that the university/corporate partnership should be more interactive. University tenure policy might be adapted to include recognition of professional practice. On the flip side, it was suggested that the corporate world should welcome professors to become part-time practitioners. The mutual exposure would broaden each discipline.

And the public can assert its right that professionals be able to meet its changing needs. In the session conducted by James Hunter, Commissioner for Higher Education, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it was stressed that "professionals alone cannot determine continuing professional education needs, but society may demand to be assured of the highest quality service."

Focus Group 2:

Identify the Components of a Usable Cross-Professional Data Base

This group will be charged with helping to make possible what may be the single most immediate way to maximize the effectiveness of continuing professional education. If successful, it will help create a tool for providers to share state-of-the-art methods and research. If the focus group can propose a way to build a thorough data base with the synthesis of current research, available methods and resources, plus an index of completed studies, it can open the window on today to help create a better tomorrow.

Background:

The genesis of this focus group was probably in the words of Philip

Nowlen, who in a small group session said the field of continuing professional education is filled with brilliant improvisations and that providers, unaware of what one another is doing, have to keep reinventing the wheel.

Abstracts and indices are useful if not critical in shortcutting a research project. There was not a single dissident at the conference when it was stated that there is a need for an accessible data base. If materials cannot be found they cannot be used.

With this greater diffusion of knowledge, there may be a greater common understanding among the various fields in the enterprise of

continuing professional education. A sharing of new developments can help create new networks for

enhancement and the development of an entirely new framework.

Focus Group 3:

Explore Range of Potential Needs Assessment Methods

One future agenda item voiced with conviction was that those who provide continuing professional education had better act before the government legislates inappropriate solutions. Many conference attendees felt that self-regulation is preferable to avoid resentment resulting from external intervention. Also there was a fear that outside regulation may provide superficial continuing professional education which would not enhance performance nor individual growth. With that in mind this focus group will be asked to catalog various needs assessment methods and evaluate their efficacy.

Background:

The subject of assessment was discussed in a small group session conducted by Wayne Smutz, Head of the Office of Continuing Professional Education at The Pennsylvania State University. The questions were asked: "If performance assessment is needed in continuing professional education, who should do it? Who should set standards? Who should pay for it? and How will the results be dealt with?"

The possibility was raised that double standards should be set, one for entry level professionals and then at intermittent levels thereafter as is

the case with airline pilots. In a session conducted by James Hunter, it was agreed that there is a sad lack of performance assessment after the initial educational experience.

There was concern that licensing requirements could diminish concern about quality on the part of the professional, and it was said that better programs will do as much to assure increased participation as would licensing requirements.

It was noted that the assessment procedure need not be a punitive process and it was suggested that as part of the future agenda, the question be asked as to how the process can be made more positive.

Specifically, it was said, assessment instruments are worth little if not reliable and valid. To be so they should measure currency, productivity, creativity and competitiveness.

In an attempt to provide some input into role responsibility it was observed that professionals can provide peer evaluation; organizations can set standards; and institutions can work with professionals and associations to develop programs and conduct needs assessment research.

"There is a bias against experiential learning in western education. Adults want their own way of learning validated, whereas the university persists in the traditional method of testing with no evaluation of outcomes."

— Badi Foster

Focus Group 4:

Building Collaborative Relationships Among Providers

In response to a consensus that collaborative relationships work only when a need has been established . . . that collaboration for collaboration's sake is meaningless, this focus group has been suggested. The participants will first identify specific learning or societal needs. Then they will unleash their creative energy on determining how each

entity can contribute in a collaborative way to addressing that need.

Background:

It is hoped that the process of building collaborative relationships will meet one of the criticisms voiced at the conference: that there is education in isolation. "Attitude

adjustments are crucial to help everyone abandon preconceived notions, remove negative perceptions, create the ability to 'see the whole,' and enhance flexibility and openness," was the way the problem was summed up in a small group session conducted by Mary Janata, Program Director of the Commission on Interprofessional Education and Practice at Ohio State University.

One perspective offered was that true collaboration adds a broad perspective to what otherwise would simply be a cooperative effort. This focus group may negate a prediction made by LeRoy Erickson, Executive Director, Education and Scientific

Trust, Pennsylvania Medical Society, who said: "We won't get collaboration without clobberation."

The roles of the collaborators may vary from project to project depending on the ability of one or another to respond most directly to an identified need. Each project could have a different structure, but the critical factor of success may be the attitude each provider takes toward the others.

It is necessary to foster trust among providers by removing stereotypical and historical images and there must be a willingness to break with tradition when appropriate.

Focus Group 5:

The Technology Twist

The assignment for this focus group is to take a critical look at ways in which the field of continuing professional education can take itself into the technology of today and the near future, and to do that without being so attracted by technological innovations that good, solid, dependable tools of teaching and learning are abandoned. The results of this group's deliberations also should help providers share modern delivery systems and develop efficient programs to acquire appropriate skills.

Background:

After being taken to task at a general session address given by Dee Brock, in their small group sessions conferees addressed the topic of using technology.

While they generally agreed there needed to be additional use of hi-tech delivery systems, they were cautious.

It was Richard Moore, Acting Vice Chancellor for Administration and

Planning, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, who said it is true that providers must see the world as children see it, but they must take care not to "latch onto technology at the expense of the program." More than once, the sentiment was expressed that new methods should be chosen not because they add glitz to the marketing system, but that they should be evaluated in terms of learning objectives.

Moore cautioned that while the exploration of telecommunications in continuing professional education is appropriate, there should be efforts made to "reglamorize" low-tech. "You can curl up in an easy chair with a book more easily than with a TV monitor."

Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that providers need training to learn skills required to utilize new technology and to come to understand its constraints.

Focus Group 6:

Identify the Megatrends Continuing Professional Education Must Address

This focus group, with an educated eye, will do some environmental scanning. It is to predict the trends in

society that will trigger the greatest needs for educational intervention to take professionals into the next century.

Background:

High on the list of positive suggestions coming out of the conference was the encouragement of environmental scanning, the process of looking at the world in a global sense to see opportunities on the horizon or changes which arrived before anyone noticed.

Milton Stern said in a small group session that scanning will help identify trends affecting the future environment. "We must learn to proact rather than react," said Stern.

"Change in society will be fast, dramatic, and fundamental."

In another session, environmental scanning was praised as the basis for strategic future planning. It infuses creativity into the process, helps manage information overload, enhances a competitive posture when competing for the most talented students or more funding, and can help plan for a changing population (e.g. one with a more active aging sector and with more part-time students).

Focus Group 7:

Educating the Whole Person in Every Setting

The purpose of this focus group is to deal with perhaps the most pervasive need articulated at the conference. It was the desire to preserve the integrity of the educational process so that it does not become market-, product-, or learner-driven to the exclusion of a broader perspective, critical thinking skills, and enhanced interpersonal communication.

Background:

The words of William Young, Dean of the College of Continuing Education at Northern Illinois, were illustrative: "I want to produce leaders . . . those who see things others don't see and risk takers willing to do what needs to be done to make things happen."

The same theme had been raised at the conference by educators and by those who came from business and industry . . . even by people like Badi Foster who came from organizations where extensive in-house continuing education facilities have been built. Foster said: "Give me those who can make the critical decisions."

Other comments included the following:

"There has to be a distinction made between preparing for change and helping professionals deal with it as it happens."

"Higher education must not be contaminated with a 'bottom line' philosophy but must maintain a commitment to impart social consequences of actions . . . not just what works and what doesn't."

"Corporations are interested in educational products, but higher education should be interested in the educational process, and professional associations should be interested in educating the person as a professional practitioner."

"Liberal education must be linked to areas of professional practice and must be given a greater emphasis in pre-professional education."

"Continuing professional education needs to supplement what is learned on the job."

"Some continuing professional education should be designed to advance the profession, some to advance the person."



Focus Group 8:

What Kind of Educators Do Professionals Need?

This focus group will be charged with examining how continuing professional educators can best serve their

constituents in the next decade and beyond. Its conclusions should include an overview of the commonalities and

contrasts in the needs of the various professions. And, once the needs are established, the group will be asked to outline efforts which might be forged to help meet the identified needs.

Background:

There occurred at the conference a critical self analysis by those in attendance who are providers of continuing professional education. "It's time to provide continuing professional education for providers of continuing professional education . . . there is a need to teach teachers how and what to teach in a world where sets of competencies are out-of-date so quickly. There are points in time when the providers may not know more than the learners."

In an effort to update the providers, conferees were concerned that without thoughtful strategic planning, the system of continuing professional education may become strictly learner or user driven. And although they allowed that the field must be more responsive to the real

world, they expressed a strong desire to continue a service culture as opposed to a product culture alone.

Durand Jacobs, Chief of the Psychology Service at Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans Hospital in Loma Linda, California, said continuing professional education is a "symptom chase," but that the problem is not to create new knowledge. "Most professionals have knowledge; they need judgment."

While agreeing that continuing professional education must validate itself by proving it really improves the practice of a profession (based on the subsequent achievement of the practitioner), there was a warm response to a philosophy espoused by Alan Knox of the Department of Continuing and Vocational Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He said: "There should be a model developed based on inquiry and discovery which will enhance individual critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Professions have some unique learning profiles."

Focus Group 9:

Who Should Pay?

Realizing that all might be possible in a world of unlimited financial resources, but that the field of continuing professional education has a critical role to play with finite and sometimes less than adequate budgets, the charge to this focus group is to examine ways of identifying a wider base of financial support and to set forth proven ways to contain costs without sacrificing quality.

Background:

Although the basic bent of the conferees was not entrepreneurial, they agreed reluctantly that to be effective, their services have to reach the target audience. And that means there is a need to market more effectively, attract more entities to underwrite their programs, and be

cost effective in their design models.

In one small group discussion session, the point was made that overcontrolling of costs can limit ability to provide a quality educational experience. The unhappy fact is that practice oriented programs are more expensive to produce than programs that deliver information alone.

Sandra G. Crandall, Chairperson of Pennsylvania Nurses Association's Continuing Education Committee, responded by citing the importance of "Robin Hood pricing" or "benefit bundling" techniques in which two programs, one a moneymaker and one not, are planned together. Cost effectiveness is thus achieved because one program pays the other's way.



Another point made was that "cost depends on value to the consumer." Therefore, related to cost control is

the need to educate practitioners to the varying quality of continuing professional education programs.

Focus Group 10:

Interprofessional Collaboration

"We must do strategic planning, not strategic yearning."

— Milton Stern

The professions have much to learn from one another in the area of continuing professional education. Conference participants repeatedly extolled the value inherent in opportunities for individuals across professions to work together for the improvement of their range of practices. The focus group addressing interprofessional collaboration should identify ways in which continuing professional education can promote and enhance interprofessional practice. A second charge to this focus group is the definition of a framework for addressing interprofessional learning needs.

Background:

Interprofessional collaboration has potential at two levels.

First, professionals do not practice in isolation. As the Ohio State Commission on Interprofessional Education and Practice has shown, considerable merit exists in bringing together the variety of practitioners whose skills are required to address societal problems. For example, caring for an ill child has implications

for the physician, nurse, teacher, psychologist, clergyman, and dietitian.

Second, practitioners across professions share a number of learning needs, and there are benefits to be derived from addressing these needs interprofessionally. Communications skills, for instance, have been shown to be weak areas for practitioners of a number of professions. While it may be desirable to address many learning needs in profession-specific terms, others can and should be met through programs designed to provide interprofessional exchange of ideas.

From the Report Author:

This report cannot duplicate nor completely capture the spirit of the conference, during which there was an impressive array of creative thinking applied to the problem solving process.

The potential learner in me was stimulated by the enthusiasm and commitment to the future that was envisioned by those at the conference.

The journalist in me was exposed to what seems to be a much bigger story than is portrayed by my own colleagues in the media.

Thus, perhaps I can indulge myself in making at least one suggestion for a future agenda. Some emphasis should be placed on public relations and in the future, involvement of those who can help spread the word should be included. Excitement can and should be created.

Winifred Boyle Haag



The Last Word

The National Conference on Continuing Professional Education held at The Pennsylvania State University September 28-October 1, 1986, was a beginning. It brought together a variety of people from diverse backgrounds whose common ground was their interest in and concern with continuing professional education.

As a first step, the conference provided a forum for the discussion of many issues facing continuing professional education. What emerged was a polyglot of views.

*Some were harsh views directed at higher education. Perhaps, as Robert DeSio suggested, they were expressed in an effort to "shake up higher education a little" and to allow colleges and universities to see themselves as others may see them.

*Professional associations did not receive the attention they deserve. One reason may have been that no general session speaker came from this perspective. As we move ahead, our focus may have to be shifted to better encompass their participation, and they will have to assert themselves more strongly.

*Private entrepreneurial providers of continuing professional education were not well represented, nor was their role a part of the discussion, an omission noted by several conferees.

*Robert Craig, Editor of *Training and Development Handbook*, expressed the fear that higher education, overwhelmed by the technological advances and well-funded educational programs of industry, might abandon its critical role in influencing the content of continuing professional education.

These concerns and others are yet to be addressed. And if there was one dominant theme, it was that the conversations must continue, but should be more targeted.

Perhaps the most tangible recommendation to emerge from the conference is that a number of small groups be formed to address the major issues raised. Therefore, this report is a call for help. The next step will require the participation and support of many individuals, organizations, and institutions.

Penn State's Office of Continuing Professional Education is willing to coordinate this effort. However, we certainly do not feel proprietary about this role and we strongly encourage the collaboration of others. Robert Young, President, Lockheed Engineering and Management Systems, Houston, Texas, suggested that continuing professional education "needs a zealot." I would suggest that we need not one, but several.

We request your recommendations, comments, and most of all, your commitment to help continuing professional education with the next steps. As noted earlier in this report, focus group members will be identified from among those people expressing interest prior to January 15, 1987. With your active collaboration, we shall move ahead.

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